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Eighty-first year

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Zalabata Torres.....	(Colombia)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain	Mr. Alrowaiei
	China	Mr. Fu Cong
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mrs. Kabengele Lukundula
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	France	Mr. Bonnafont
	Greece.....	Mrs. Balta
	Latvia.....	Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes
	Liberia	Mr. Brown II
	Pakistan.....	Mr. Ahmad
	Panama	Mr. Moscoso
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Somalia	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.....	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America.....	Mr. Waltz

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Israel and Lebanon to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, Assistant Secretary-General, Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Ms. Pobee.

Ms. Pobee: The situation in Lebanon is deeply alarming, marked by Israeli ground troops pushing further north into Lebanese territory and intensified Hizbullah attacks reaching deeper into Israel. On 31 May, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced that he had ordered the Israel Defense Forces to deepen and expand their control over areas previously held by Hizbullah, declaring the capture of the historic Beaufort Castle. This followed Israeli advances north of the Litani River in the Yohmor triangle. The Israel Defense Forces circulated images of an Israeli flag flying over the Castle, evoking memories of Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon from 1982 until 2000, when the castle was used as an Israeli base.

Israel has also escalated its air campaign in recent days, striking what it describes as Hizbullah targets across southern Lebanon, the Bika' Valley and the outskirts of Beirut. The Israel Defense Forces have issued sweeping urgent warnings, ordering civilians to evacuate all areas south of the Zahrani River, including the Nabitiah and Tyre areas, as well as three nearby Palestinian refugee camps, effectively designating the entirety of southern Lebanon as a combat zone. This intensified campaign has driven further mass displacement and deepened the climate of fear, with panic spreading widely among the Lebanese population. The Israel Defense Forces have expanded their presence north of the Blue Line, with the United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) in Lebanon reporting extensive military activity, including air strikes, artillery fire, logistics movements and engineering works throughout its area of operations. UNIFIL has also observed widespread demolitions of buildings and villages in the vicinity of the Blue Line. On 30 May, UNIFIL recorded 992 trajectories of projectiles fired by the Israel Defense Forces. This is the highest number since a cessation of hostilities came into effect on 17 April.

Hizbullah has continued to launch dozens of rockets, anti-tank guided missiles and drones, including increasingly deadly fibre-optic drones. It has also used surface-to-air missiles and improvised explosive devices against Israeli troops and assets inside Lebanese territory. In recent days, Hizbullah has escalated its strikes, launching rockets, drones and missiles increasingly deeper into Israeli territory. Hizbullah leaders have reiterated that the group will not disarm, defying the stated intention of the Government of Lebanon to assert a State monopoly over the use of force.

Since 2 March, the surge in hostilities has exacted a devastating human toll. According to Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health, at least 3,412 have been killed and more than 10,000 wounded in Lebanon. Among the dead and injured are hundreds of civilians, many of them women and children, as well as journalists and medical workers who had been serving on the front lines. Twenty-one Lebanese Armed Forces

personnel have been killed. Four Israeli civilians and 26 Israel Defense Forces personnel have also been killed, with destruction and displacement affecting communities on both sides of the Blue Line. Six UNIFIL peacekeepers have been killed and several wounded.

These developments mark a dangerous and alarming escalation, directly undermining the cessation of hostilities understanding announced by the United States on 16 April and eroding fragile diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation. They cast a long shadow over ongoing attempts to facilitate direct talks between Lebanon and Israel and risk derailing the already tenuous path towards a permanent ceasefire. Israel's presence north of the Blue Line is a clear violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and resolution 1701 (2006). Israeli forces must withdraw to south of the Blue Line. Hizbullah and other non-State armed groups in Lebanon must disarm and cooperate with Government efforts to extend State security and assert a State monopoly over the use of force. The possession and the use of weapons outside of State control is a clear violation of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). The Lebanese Armed Forces are the only legitimate armed force in Lebanon. We reiterate the urgent need for increased international support for the Lebanese Armed Forces and other State security institutions to enable them to fully exercise their authority and responsibility to ensure security and stability across the entirety of Lebanon's territory.

Humanitarian needs in Lebanon are rising sharply, as the relentless destruction of homes, essential services and civilian infrastructure deepens an already dire situation. Entire communities are being uprooted, and the scale of suffering is compounding the country's overwhelming recovery and reconstruction burden.

Diplomatic efforts must be given the space to succeed. Further escalation is intolerable. The populations of Israel and Lebanon have already endured immense suffering, and immediate steps are needed to alleviate it. We welcome the meeting between Lebanese and Israeli military representatives, hosted by the United States in Washington, D.C., on 29 May, following meetings held in Washington between political representatives of Lebanon and Israel to the United States in recent months. We note that further meetings at the political level are anticipated this week. The United Nations, including through the Special Coordinator for Lebanon, stands ready to support these diplomatic efforts to secure a sustained cessation of hostilities that is fully respected by all actors on the ground and to advance the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The ultimate objective remains clear: a durable permanent ceasefire adhered to by all sides.

All actors must exercise maximum restraint and cease actions that risk upending efforts towards a lasting resolution. These hostilities are reverberating across the region. We note with concern today's reported statements from Tehran that in response to the situation in Lebanon, Iran will suspend dialogue with the United States, block the Strait of Hormuz and activate other fronts. We must urgently redouble efforts to avert any further escalation. In this context, we welcome reports from a short time ago today that intense diplomatic efforts may be yielding results and averting further escalation.

We call on all countries in the region that maintain ties with Hizbullah to encourage the group to cooperate with Lebanese State efforts to achieve a monopoly on arms. We call on Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanese territory, in full respect of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Civilians must be protected. Civilian infrastructure, including cultural heritage sites, must not be targeted. United Nations personnel must not be targeted, and United Nations premises must remain inviolable. We urge the Council to reinforce these calls

and to help create the conditions for an immediate end to hostilities and for durable peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Pobee for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Bonnafont (France) (*spoke in French*): France requested that this emergency meeting be convened in view of the current major escalation and the deepening of Israeli military operations in Lebanon, despite the ceasefire that came into effect on 17 April under the auspices of the United States. I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this meeting at such short notice, and I thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Martha Pobee, for her briefing. We would also like to welcome the participation of the representatives of Lebanon and Israel in this meeting.

Let us make this clear from the outset: it is Hizbullah, backed by Iran, that bears responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities, having dragged Lebanon and the Lebanese people into a war that is not theirs. We have condemned them unequivocally, just as we condemn Hizbullah's continued attacks on Israeli territory today. We recognize Israel's right to defend itself against Hizbullah's attacks. However, nothing can justify the duration and scale of Israel's military operations in Lebanon, the thousands of deaths and injuries among the civilian population, the forced displacement of people or Israel's ever-deepening occupation of Lebanese territory. This constitutes a major strategic error on Israel's part. Moreover, these operations run counter to the commitments that Israel made on 17 April and to the resolutions of the Council. It is urgent that the guns fall silent.

This headlong rush took on a symbolic dimension yesterday. By planting its flag on the Beaufort Castle, which served as its base during the occupation of southern Lebanon until 2000, Israel is reviving a period that we had hoped was a thing of the past. History warns us that the same causes are entirely likely to produce the same effects. Far from bringing security to Israel and its people, a new occupation risks only fuelling instability, as every village bombed and razed to the ground and every civilian killed strengthen Hizbullah and weaken the Lebanese Government, whose political will to consolidate Lebanon's sovereignty we commend. Israel has a major role to play in helping the Lebanese Government to translate this political will into action. Israel's security lies neither in war nor in occupation. It lies in peace with Israel's neighbours and in the stability of the region.

The ceasefire of 17 April is fragile, but it remains the path to a lasting agreement. That is why France supports the direct talks between Lebanon and Israel under the auspices of the United States. These talks, which are slated to continue on 2 and 3 June, represent a crucial opportunity. The time has come to translate them into concrete results, and we call on all stakeholders, including the United States, which is hosting the talks, to do everything possible to ensure their success. Important announcements have just been made. It is essential that they be implemented. We hope that these negotiations between Israel and Lebanon will lead to a just and lasting political solution, including the disarmament of Hizbullah, the restoration of the Lebanese State's full sovereignty, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory and the guarantee of full respect for Lebanon's territorial integrity. We also hope that these negotiations will pave an irreversible path to peace and security for both countries. Until the guns fall silent, it remains an absolute imperative that civilians, whether Lebanese or Israeli, along with journalists and aid workers, not be targeted. Respect for international humanitarian law is essential in all circumstances to ensure the protection of civilian populations and infrastructure and to guarantee access to those in need of assistance.

France's clear and consistent position can be summarized in four points.

First, we fully support the Lebanese people, authorities and Army. The Lebanese people, who are suffering the consequences of a war that they did not choose, need assistance and protection now more than ever. France is working to that end by providing 17 million euros in humanitarian assistance to support the Lebanese authorities in managing this humanitarian crisis, which is unprecedented in scale and in duration. For its part, the Lebanese Army has the task of continuing, under difficult conditions, to disarm Hizbullah and extend the authority of the State. We are providing concrete support through the delivery of 39 armoured vehicles. France will continue to offer its full support to the Lebanese authorities and will organize in Paris an international conference in support of the Lebanese Armed Forces as soon as the situation permits.

Secondly, Hizbullah must immediately cease its attacks and hand over its weapons to the Lebanese State, in accordance with the courageous decision taken by the Lebanese Government on 2 March. For its part, Iran must put an end to the support that it provides to Hizbullah and stop undermining stability in the region.

Thirdly, we reject any Israeli occupation of Lebanon. Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity are non-negotiable. We do not accept the occupation of positions on Lebanese soil or the establishment of a buffer zone. We do not accept evacuation orders, the prohibition on displaced populations returning to their homes or destruction. This applies to archaeological sites, and in particular to the neighbourhoods of the city of Tyre, which are listed as UNESCO world heritage sites. No security consideration can justify the permanent infringement of a State's sovereignty.

The fourth point is respect for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and its personnel. France reaffirms its full support for the mandate of UNIFIL, which must be able to carry out its duties fully and without hindrance until the end of that mandate, as provided for in resolution 2790 (2025). France recalls that the protection of peacekeepers is an obligation under international law that applies to all parties without exception. France commends the courage, professionalism and commitment of the Force's personnel and of all troop-contributing countries, and it recalls that two of its soldiers recently lost their lives in the course of this mission.

The path to a diplomatic solution is clear. It lies in the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and in compliance with the ceasefire by all parties. France is working tirelessly towards this end, at all levels, with the Lebanese and Israeli authorities and all its partners.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Ms. Martha Pobee for her briefing on the situation in Lebanon.

We supported the French request to hold today's emergency meeting of the Security Council, because the situation in Lebanon deserves the full attention of the international community. The ceasefire reached on 17 April between West Jerusalem and Beirut, brokered by Washington, has unfortunately turned out to be a smokescreen for creeping aggression against Lebanon. While the entire world awaited the next round of talks, scheduled for 2 June in the United States capital, the Israelis continued to methodically expand the zone of occupation, razing entire settlements to the ground as part of their scorched earth tactics. It is becoming clear that the scenario of the "cleansing" of the Gaza Strip is being replicated almost entirely in Lebanon, with the establishment of large-scale occupation control and the forced displacement of the local population.

Twenty-six years after the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, the blue and white flag is once again flying over the Crusader fortress of Beaufort, which has outlasted Saladin, the Mamluks, the Ottoman Empire and the French Mandate. We are

confident that this castle, built in the twelfth century and listed as a UNESCO world heritage site, will survive yet another Israeli occupation.

Whereas the Israeli side previously announced its plans to limit the buffer zone to the Litani River, West Jerusalem's ambitions now span the Zahrani River, with residents of Tyre and other major cities in the south being advised to evacuate. Thus, the emphasis is being placed on continuing the war, which has claimed the lives of more than 3,300 Lebanese since 2 March and forced more than 1 million people to flee their homes. Among those who are being regularly killed in the conflict zone are also rescue workers, doctors and journalists.

We strongly condemn Israel's aggressive actions and reaffirm our steadfast commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. We demand the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory, which is a prerequisite for a genuine ceasefire. We have closely studied the information released just a few hours ago about the results of the contacts between the United States and the parties to the conflict, including about the cessation of hostilities announced by Washington. We have taken note of these reports, but before making any further assessments, we need to see some concrete steps in this direction, specifically by Israel's military and political leadership.

It is paradoxical, but, as history shows, military conquests and expanding occupation do not resolve the truly pressing security issue facing Israel's northern territories. On the contrary, they tend to undermine the position of the Lebanese Government, whose commitment to achieving a negotiated solution is beyond doubt. The other day Lebanese Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri posed a question: who will compel Israel to stop its aggression? This is a rhetorical question, but until it remains unanswered, the situation will be in deadlock. Under these circumstances, it should come as no surprise that armed resistance to the occupation is increasingly being viewed as the only viable option. The continued and ever-expanding occupation of Lebanon is unacceptable and fraught with exacerbating ethnic and religious tensions, national division and the threat of civil war. The unfolding of such a scenario could undermine the already fragile security situation in the Middle East.

We see here the only way out, namely a return of both sides to strict compliance with their obligations under resolution 1701 (2006), which envisions the full de-occupation of Lebanon and the extension of State sovereignty over the entire territory of the country. We should bear in mind that the deterioration of the situation in Lebanon is a direct consequence of the unjustified aggression by the United States and Israel against Iran. Accordingly, the progress of the current Iran-America negotiations largely depends on how the situation evolves in the Lebanese theatre of operations. In this context, Russia fully supports international mediation efforts, first and foremost those of friendly Pakistan, and advocates finding a comprehensive political and diplomatic solution aimed at the overall stabilization of the situation in the entire Middle East region.

We fully support the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), whose peacekeepers continue to valiantly carry out their duties under the most difficult circumstances. We demand that the safety of the blue helmets be fully safeguarded and that those responsible for the killing and wounding of peacekeepers be held accountable. Given the imminent expiration of UNIFIL's mandate at the end of the year and the beginning of the mission's drawdown, we deem it necessary to maintain a meaningful United Nations presence along the Blue Line, without which it will be impossible to monitor the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Russia, as a responsible member of the Security Council, is ready to participate constructively in future discussions on this matter with a view to finding a mutually acceptable solution.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobe for briefing us this afternoon.

The United Kingdom joined in calling for this meeting to condemn the severe escalation of Israeli military action in Lebanon over recent days. This reckless and disproportionate escalation of Israeli military action has exacerbated an already devastating environment for Lebanese civilians and placed the Government of Lebanon under further strain. Civilians have been killed and over 1 million displaced, civilian homes and infrastructure destroyed and the space for diplomacy eroded. Further escalation on this scale is simply not proportionate and cannot set the conditions for lasting peace.

We reiterate that Hizbullah, at the instigation of Iran, has dragged Lebanon into a war that its Government and people do not want. We strongly condemn Lebanese Hizbullah's ongoing attacks against Israel. We also condemn recent comments by Hizbullah's leadership that seek to destabilize the democratically elected Government of Lebanon within its own country. Hizbullah does not speak or act for the people of Lebanon. We are clear that Hizbullah must end attacks on Israel and disarm.

UNICEF has reported that 15 children were killed and 62 injured in Lebanon last week as a result of the conflict. That is 11 children killed or injured every 24 hours. Healthcare workers are also facing death and injury as they carry out their duties. The escalation must end. We call upon all parties to uphold their obligations under international law.

Israel's legitimate concerns about the security of their northern communities will not be solved by military escalation. The talks convened by the United States between the Governments of Israel and Lebanon are the only viable path towards a lasting political settlement and the disarmament of Hizbullah. We warmly welcomed these talks. And yet, progress is being undermined by both Hizbullah and Israel. All parties must implement a genuine and lasting cessation of hostilities to allow space for real diplomatic progress.

We support the efforts of the Lebanese Government to extend its authority throughout the country in line with resolution 1701 (2006), including through the strengthening of Lebanese State institutions and security forces and the disarmament of Hizbullah. We call for swift implementation. Escalation in Lebanon and across the Blue Line risks further destabilizing Lebanon and undermining critical negotiations to achieve peace across the region. The United Kingdom will continue to support diplomatic efforts that deliver lasting peace and security for both Lebanon and Israel.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China supports the holding of today's emergency Security Council meeting. I thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobe for her briefing.

Recently, the situation between Lebanon and Israel has escalated sharply. Israel has expanded its military operations against Lebanon, continued to enlarge the so-called security zone and even crossed the Litani River and occupied Beaufort Castle. This is Israel's deepest military incursion in Lebanon in more than 20 years. Israel has also stated that it plans to further expand ground operations. The intentions behind this and the potentially severe consequences are deeply concerning to the international community. The ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel is now close to existing in name only. The international community must take urgent action before the situation slides into an even more dangerous abyss.

I would like to make three points.

First, there must be an immediate cessation of hostilities to ease tensions. Israel's continued advancement of its war machine has already claimed the lives of over 3,400

people in Lebanon. Military force is not the solution, and expanding occupation cannot bring lasting security. All parties concerned, especially Israel, must immediately cease hostilities, fully observe the temporary ceasefire arrangements, implement resolution 1701 (2006) and other related resolutions and work to de-escalate the situation as soon as possible. We have noted that Lebanon and Israel are negotiating a ceasefire. We welcome all efforts aimed at peace, and we hope that countries with important influence over the parties will take active action to bring about a ceasefire as soon as possible. The sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Lebanon must be respected. Israel must immediately and fully withdraw its forces from Lebanon.

Secondly, support for Lebanon must be stepped up to stabilize the domestic situation. The fighting has destroyed many towns and much infrastructure in Lebanon, displaced more than 1 million people and aggravated the humanitarian situation in southern Lebanon. It is important to increase emergency humanitarian assistance to Lebanon and ensure sufficient funding for humanitarian organizations to help Lebanon respond to its humanitarian challenges. Lebanon has its own unique national circumstances. The international community should support its efforts in maintaining national stability and promoting internal unity. We welcome the Lebanese Government's efforts to strengthen State control and support active political dialogue among all parties within Lebanon to properly resolve differences.

Thirdly, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) must be guaranteed the ability to perform its duties in order to maintain regional stability. UNIFIL plays an irreplaceable role in maintaining stability vis-à-vis the situation between Lebanon and Israel. During this escalation, there have been multiple incidents in which UNIFIL personnel have been attacked and their operations obstructed. China condemns any attacks against peacekeepers and urges all parties to effectively ensure the safety and freedom of movement of UNIFIL and to hold those responsible for all such attacks to account. As UNIFIL's mandate is about to expire, the Security Council must make a responsible decision to ensure the continuation of the United Nations presence in Lebanon and to prevent a security vacuum.

China stands ready to work with all parties to help calm the situation between Lebanon and Israel as soon as possible and to restore peace and stability in Lebanon and the Middle East.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): Let me also thank Assistant Secretary-General Pöbke for her concerning briefing.

We supported the call for this meeting as the situation in Lebanon is growing increasingly critical. Over the past three months, we have witnessed developments that raise serious concerns about a renewed Israeli occupation of Lebanon. The recent military escalation and expansion of ground operations in southern Lebanon beyond the Litani River, reaching as far as Tyre and Nabatiyah, add to this concern. This represents Israel's deepest military push into Lebanon in 26 years, and it must stop.

While Israel has the right to self-defence, this must be exercised in accordance with international law. We call for full respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. This includes withdrawing Israeli forces from southern Lebanon.

We also reiterate our strong condemnation of Hizbullah's continued attacks against Israel and underline that those attacks must stop immediately.

All parties must respect the ceasefire. We continue to support the direct talks between Israel and Lebanon and hope that they can pave the way for lasting peace. We support the re-establishment of a robust monitoring mechanism, along the lines of that

which existed during the 2024 ceasefire, to ensure compliance with the current ceasefire agreement and build trust between the parties.

Denmark is deeply concerned about the humanitarian and civilian consequences of Israel's military operations in Lebanon. The escalating conflict has created a humanitarian crisis in Lebanon and displaced more than 1 million people, about 20 per cent of the entire Lebanese population. Let me reiterate well-known calls. Safe, secure and sustained humanitarian access to civilians must be ensured in accordance with international humanitarian law. Denmark condemns all attacks directed at civilians and civilian infrastructure, including first responders and healthcare personnel. Israel must cease all demolitions of civilian infrastructure. We are also deeply concerned by military operations in and around Lebanon's cultural heritage sites. Cultural property must be protected and must not be used for military purposes. International law must be fully respected at all times.

Hizbullah has once again dragged Lebanon into an unwanted war. Hizbullah must disarm in full accordance with resolution 1701 (2006) and cease all attacks on Israel. We commend the Lebanese Government for the steps it has taken to restore the State's monopoly over arms and to expand the authority of the Lebanese Armed Forces. The current military escalation risks undermining these positive steps. Focus should now be on strengthening the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese Armed Forces to enable them to fulfil their disarmament mandate rather than extending the conflict.

We also stress the importance of a continued strong and effective United Nations presence in Lebanon in support of resolution 1701 (2006). As the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) approaches its end, we must ensure that there is no vacuum in the international community's engagement. We welcome the Secretary-General's report on this question (S/2026/160) and look forward to its thorough discussion.

In closing, sovereignty and territorial integrity are not just theoretical principles. They are at the very foundation of the international order we have fought to uphold within this Chamber for the past 80 years. What we are witnessing in Lebanon today is what happens when those principles erode. The potential ripple effects for Lebanon, the region and the credibility of the Council are all too clear. It is our collective responsibility to continue to protect them.

Ms. Balta (Greece): I thank you, Madam President, for promptly scheduling today's urgent meeting. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Martha Pobeë for her thorough remarks.

Lebanon stands at a dangerous crossroads. What is at stake is not only its sovereignty, but also the stability of the wider region. The continued hostilities between Israel and Hizbullah, despite the ceasefire arrangements and ongoing diplomatic efforts, are causing immense suffering to civilians while further destabilizing the country.

Greece has condemned in the strongest terms, since the very beginning, Hizbullah's attacks against Israel, which dragged Lebanon into this devastating conflict, one that it neither pursued nor deserves. At the same time, while recognizing Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, we are deeply concerned by the continued expansion of Israeli military operations inside Lebanon. The recent capture of the strategic Beaufort Castle and the surrounding ridge marks a dangerous further ground incursion into Lebanese territory. We urge the reversal of this recent act, as it could, moreover, be counterproductive with regard to a political solution and risk pushing it further out of reach.

We call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and renewed efforts towards a durable diplomatic settlement. Full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and strict

adherence to all ceasefire commitments by all parties remain indispensable. We support the continuation of direct political talks between Israel and Lebanon in Washington, D.C., urging the parties to engage constructively and in good faith towards a comprehensive ceasefire agreement, which can have a positive impact on sustainable peace in the region as well.

At the same time, we reaffirm that the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure must remain a top priority. Thousands have lost their lives, over 1 million people have been displaced, and critical infrastructure has suffered extensive damage. The latest military developments in southern Lebanon risk triggering additional displacement, further exacerbating an already acute humanitarian crisis. Greece has already organized a national aid mission to Lebanon, delivering humanitarian and development assistance, and plans on organizing more. We are also finalizing the allocation of a substantial financial contribution through the World Health Organization aimed at strengthening Lebanon's health sector, namely the Saint George Hospital in Beirut, while providing three tons of humanitarian aid to Beirut. We stand ready to contribute more to international efforts aimed at supporting Lebanon's recovery, security and institutional resilience.

Amid the ongoing crisis, we cannot overlook the Lebanese Government's efforts to restore the State's monopoly over arms and strengthen national institutions under highly unfavourable circumstances. The Lebanese Government's decision to fully ban Hizbullah's military activities is a clear example of its determination to deal with demanding issues, and our efforts should focus on supporting it in achieving that goal. A stable and secure Lebanon can be attained only through strong State institutions capable of exercising effective governance across the entire country. The Lebanese Government needs and deserves the full support of the international community.

Greece will continue to support the efforts of President Aoun and the Government of Lebanon. In this regard, we support the Lebanese Army bilaterally. Upon the request of the Lebanese Government, we have procured defence equipment, soon to be followed by a second round of defence material.

Last but not least, we reiterate once again our call for the safety and security of the personnel of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, who continue to operate under extremely challenging conditions. United Nations peacekeepers are an essential pillar of stability and a visible expression of the international community's commitment to peace. We strongly condemn all attacks and acts of intimidation against United Nations peacekeepers, as such actions are contrary to international law and relevant Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, should the current military escalation and territorial expansion continue, the outcome is unlikely to bring greater security. Instead, it risks producing further instability, potentially with regional repercussions, additional suffering for civilians and an ever more elusive political solution. We urge all parties to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue at this critical moment and to take tangible steps towards de-escalation. Lebanon deserves a future of peace, security and dignity, free from external interference and internal division. Greece will stand by its side in that effort.

Ms. Pavluta-Deslandes (Latvia): Allow me to begin by thanking you, Madam President, for convening this meeting at such short notice. I also thank France for requesting this meeting in light of the increasing escalation in Lebanon. I thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobee for her briefing.

In April, the historic direct talks between Lebanon and Israel offered a glimmer of hope that there is a path towards sustainable stability and peace, and we welcome the ongoing efforts of mediators, notably the United States, which continue advancing this

objective. Stability in the region can be achieved only through political and diplomatic means.

Regrettably, the cessation of hostilities agreed on 16 April continues to be violated on a daily basis, undermining the efforts of Lebanon's Government to extend its authority across the country. The principal obstacle to Lebanon's stability and sovereignty remains Hizbullah, whose actions have repeatedly thrown Lebanon into conflict.

We again unequivocally condemn Hizbullah's attacks against Israel. Hizbullah has repeatedly chosen Iran's interests over those of the Lebanese people. It must cease its attacks immediately. Iran must cease its support for Hizbullah and instead support efforts aimed at de-escalation and long-term peace.

We reiterate our firm commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. The implementation of resolution 1701(2006), including the disarmament of Hizbullah and the extension of the Lebanese Army's control throughout southern Lebanon, remains a prerequisite for achieving lasting peace and security.

While Israel has the right to defend itself against attacks launched by Hizbullah against its territory and population, all such military operations must be conducted in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law. We therefore call upon Israel to halt its advance into Lebanese territory and refrain from attacks on heavily populated areas.

With more than 1 million people in Lebanon displaced by the conflict, new large-scale evacuation orders continue to aggravate an already severe humanitarian situation. More than 3,000 people have been killed since March and 10,000 injured. Of the displaced, at least 13,500 are pregnant women. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon has reported that most of the casualties in the south are women and children who have nowhere to go. Recently, the Israel Defense Forces attacks on the city of Tyre caused additional civilian casualties.

We insist that all parties must respect international law, including international humanitarian law, and ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, including historic and cultural sites that enjoy special legal protection.

The capture of Beaufort Castle reminds us of the repetition of the cycle of violence that occurred 44 years ago. While Israel views its military operations as necessary for its security, the latest developments also highlight that military action alone will not achieve lasting stability.

Continued escalation is weakening Lebanese institutions and reinforcing Hizbullah's resistance narrative, which will not contribute to long-term security and stability for either Israel or Lebanon. Efforts should instead be focused on supporting the bilateral mediation talks in Washington, D.C., on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), expanding the control of the Lebanese Army in southern Lebanon, dismantling Hizbullah and providing support to the Lebanese Government in strengthening its authority as the sole and legitimate sovereign power.

We urge all parties to prioritize de-escalation, peace and sustainable security. The latest announcement today on the positive reactions by Lebanon, Israel and Hizbullah to the United States proposal for a reciprocal cessation of attacks is encouraging, but it must be followed by genuine implementation and tangible steps. It is our collective responsibility to restore peace and security in the region.

Mrs. Kabengele Lukundula (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): The Democratic Republic of the Congo thanks you, Madam President, for convening this emergency meeting to consider the situation in Lebanon. We thank

Assistant Secretary-General Martha Pobeé for her briefing and for her ongoing efforts to restore peace in Lebanon.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains deeply concerned about the continued deterioration of the security situation in southern Lebanon. The ongoing conduct of military operations poses a growing threat to the country's stability and fuels legitimate concerns about a further escalation of tensions in a particularly fragile region already affected by multiple sources of instability.

As we stated on 5 May, the Democratic Republic of the Congo reaffirms its firm commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. Respect for these principles remains indispensable to any prospect of lasting peace and regional stability.

In this context, my delegation calls on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from any action likely to fuel escalation. We also recall the obligation incumbent upon all actors to fully respect international law, including international humanitarian law.

The protection of civilians must remain an absolute priority. The growing humanitarian impact of the hostilities, particularly the displacement of populations, civilian casualties and damage to essential infrastructure, cannot leave us indifferent under any circumstances. All parties must take all necessary measures to spare civilians and to ensure safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access to affected populations.

We also reiterate the importance of the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1701 (2006), which remains essential for preserving the ceasefire and maintaining stability along the Blue Line. In this regard, the role of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon remains fundamental. Its security and freedom of movement must be fully guaranteed.

This military escalation comes at a time when Lebanon is facing significant political, security, economic and social challenges. This further deterioration would only aggravate the country's fragility and increase the suffering of the Lebanese people, thereby compromising prospects for recovery and stability. In light of this reality, it is imperative to intensify diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and restore peace.

In this regard, the Democratic Republic of the Congo supports all regional and international initiatives aimed at maintaining calm and fostering constructive dialogue among the parties. We also call on the international community to continue its support for the Lebanese people, especially through humanitarian assistance, and to continue that same assistance in favour of national institutions, in particular the Lebanese Armed Forces, whose role remains essential to preserving the unity, stability and sovereignty of Lebanon.

To conclude, the Democratic Republic of the Congo reaffirms its commitment to multilateralism and to respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the promotion of peace and international security. We remain convinced that immediate de-escalation, respect for international law and sincere diplomatic engagement constitute the only means capable of promoting lasting peace. The Democratic Republic of the Congo reiterates its full readiness to work in close collaboration with all members of the Council, as well as with all regional and international partners, in order to restore lasting peace and promote prosperity in this long-suffering region.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank the French Republic for requesting the convening of this meeting, which comes at a pivotal moment amid the dangerous escalation being witnessed by the brotherly Lebanese Republic. We stress the importance of the Council's shouldering its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, working to contain the escalation, preventing the

widening of the conflict and sparing the region further tension and instability. We also thank Ms. Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, Assistant Secretary-General in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, for her comprehensive briefing.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has followed with concern the recent military developments in southern Lebanon and the dangerous escalation witnessed in the region, which threatens Lebanon's security and stability and portends further deterioration in the humanitarian and security situation, the effects of which may be felt in regional security and stability.

The Kingdom welcomes the announcement by the President of the United States of America that an agreement has been reached to halt attacks and considers it a positive step towards de-escalation, the cessation of hostilities and the strengthening of security and stability in the Lebanese Republic and the region. It expresses the hope that those efforts will help consolidate calm and create conditions conducive to reaching sustainable solutions that enhance security and stability and pave the way towards lasting and comprehensive peace for the benefit of all the peoples of the entire region.

The Kingdom warns of the worsening humanitarian repercussions in Lebanon, stressing that continued military escalation would increase the suffering of civilians and compound the burdens faced by the brotherly Lebanese people, particularly in the light of existing economic and humanitarian challenges. The worsening displacement and damage to basic services are also having adverse humanitarian effects on displaced persons and increasing the suffering of women and children, who bear the greatest burden of the consequences of the conflict. That calls for intensified international efforts to protect civilians and ensure the safe and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance.

In this context, the Kingdom of Bahrain affirms its steadfast support for the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Lebanese Republic and its rejection of any violation of its sovereignty, any undermining of its security and stability or any spreading of chaos and division. It also stresses the importance of respecting the relevant Security Council resolutions and of concerted international efforts to halt military operations, ensure the protection of civilians and guarantee the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law.

In parallel with efforts aimed at containing the escalation, the Kingdom stresses the importance of completing the process of strengthening the institutions of the Lebanese State and enabling them to fully shoulder their sovereign and security responsibilities. The Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes the decision of the Lebanese Government to place weapons exclusively in the hands of the Lebanese State and its legitimate institutions, including measures aimed at ending armed manifestations outside the framework of the State and disarming Hizbullah, in accordance with Lebanese legal and constitutional frameworks. The Kingdom affirms that this step represents an important development towards consolidating the sovereignty of the Lebanese State, strengthening its national institutions and extending its authority over its entire territory, in a manner that preserves Lebanon's security and stability.

The Kingdom also commends the tireless efforts being made by the United States of America in the framework of mediation and diplomatic endeavours aimed at stabilizing the situation and preventing the widening of the conflict. It affirms its support for the negotiating track between the Lebanese Republic and the State of Israel, expressing its hope that this track will lead to tangible results that contribute to enhancing security and stability, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Lebanese Republic and consolidating the foundations of peace in the region, in order to achieve the aspirations of its peoples for development and prosperity.

The Kingdom of Bahrain renews its affirmation of the importance of the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and all relevant international resolutions, in a manner that ensures respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Lebanese Republic and for the arrangements for the cessation of hostilities. It also stresses the importance of continuing to support the Lebanese Army and the official security forces and enabling them to shoulder their national responsibilities and extend the authority of the Lebanese State over its entire territory in a manner that preserves Lebanon's sovereignty and national unity and strengthens its security and stability.

In conclusion, the Kingdom reiterates that Lebanon's stability and sovereignty represent a shared regional and international interest. It calls on all parties to fully comply with the agreement to halt attacks, to refrain from any actions that would undermine the calm and reignite tension, to continue supporting diplomatic efforts aimed at consolidating stability and achieving lasting peace and to abide by the relevant international resolutions, thereby contributing to safeguarding Lebanon's security and stability and maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Mohamed Yusuf (Somalia): We express our appreciation to you, Madam President, for promptly convening this emergency meeting and thank Assistant Secretary-General Pobee for her sobering and comprehensive updates.

My delegation considers the renewed military escalation in southern Lebanon and around Beirut's southern suburbs very grave and alarming, as it does the continued violations across the Blue Line and the risk of a wider regional confrontation. Since 2 March, the human cost has been staggering, with the death toll now surpassing 3,000 civilians and nearly 10,000 injured. More than 1 million people have been displaced, including hundreds of thousands of children. The humanitarian situation has become a catastrophe.

We condemn the systematic and deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure, in particular in densely populated residential areas. The protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals and homes, is a non-negotiable obligation enshrined in international humanitarian law. We call on the occupying Power to adhere fully to its legal and moral obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The deepening occupation of Lebanese territory and the declared intent to establish a permanent security buffer zone constitute a dangerous move towards unilateral territorial expansion. We specifically deplore the occupying forces' capture of the historic Beaufort Castle and the evacuation orders for all residents south of the Zahrani River, signalling plans for further northward advancement.

Lebanon must not be treated as a theatre for proxy confrontations or unilateral territorial expansion. The ongoing Israeli violations of resolution 1701 (2006) continue to undermine regional stability and erode the prospects for sustainable peace and development in Lebanon and beyond.

We are also gravely concerned about persistent operational interference against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, including the killing and injuring of peacekeepers, the denial of freedom of movement and the blocking of access roads to United Nations positions. We reiterate that the safety and security of United Nations personnel are non-negotiable. It is also important to maintain a credible and effective United Nations presence in Lebanon, one that continues to protect and support the Lebanese people and Government.

While we take note that new ceasefire talks are scheduled for 2 and 3 June in Washington, D.C., the immediate priority is de-escalation and a return to a credible,

monitored and sustainable cessation of hostilities. It requires disciplined diplomacy before the risk becomes irreversible.

Somalia stands ready to work with all Council members in support of a balanced approach. That approach must uphold Lebanon's sovereignty, protect civilians, support the Lebanese Armed Forces, preserve a comprehensive ceasefire and advance the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

Mr. Waltz (United States of America): I thank the briefers.

On 2 March of this year, Hizbullah — as we all know, an Iranian proxy that frankly justifies its entire existence through conflict — unilaterally initiated hostilities once again with Israel, just as it did in October 2023. Hizbullah clearly sees Lebanon as nothing more than a launchpad for its Iranian-inspired attacks on Israel. It does not care about Lebanon, the country, or the future of its people.

We have seen exactly what that looks like on the ground. We do not have to go to regional media or even Israeli media to believe it. Do not take it as my supposition. Let us read it from the United Nations own reports. The High Commissioner for Human Rights himself has admitted that Hizbullah “launched indiscriminate barrages of rockets at Israel, injuring people and causing damage to residential buildings and other civilian infrastructure”. We can also see it in the very videos that Hizbullah itself releases, where it brags about hitting, killing wounded soldiers or launching missiles towards civilian targets in Israel. Those are the words of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Those are the words of Hizbullah itself. And those are what the pictures that Hizbullah chooses to share with the world reflect: not development, not growth, not a better future for Lebanon, but deliberately bragging about launching missiles into civilian areas of Israel.

I have personally been under that kind of fire. These are indiscriminate terrorist attacks. This is a terrorist group that has attacked Americans, killed peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, taken civilians hostage for decades, assassinated its own brave people that it pretends to protect who dare to speak out against it, and used civilian infrastructure — homes, schools and hospitals — to conduct its attacks across the region. These are the same thugs that have held the Lebanese people hostage for decades and that the Security Council has talked about for decades.

President Trump, who cares deeply about Lebanon personally, has proposed a clear sequence to end the conflict: Hizbullah, which started the fighting, must stop its attacks in Israel. That will create space for a gradual de-escalation, as my colleague from Somalia just mentioned, and ultimately a cessation of hostilities. Yet Hizbullah has repeatedly rejected that offer. Today, again thanks to President Trump's personal intervention, we will see if it chooses differently. But still, Hizbullah has not only rejected the Lebanese Government's demands for a ceasefire, it has even recently threatened to overthrow it. Let us let that sink in: an Iranian-backed terrorist army is threatening the legitimate Government of the country that it claims to defend.

The only conclusion we can draw is that its backer, the Iranian regime, has ordered its proxy to drag this conflict out so it can claim credit for “saving the day” and derail progress towards a peace agreement in the recent historic direct talks. We, as a global community, must reject that cynicism. The issue at hand is that Lebanon has once again been dragged into war, yet again, by a terrorist organization, at a high cost for innocent Lebanese civilians. This is the same old Iranian playbook: light the fire, hide behind civilians, hide behind homes, schools and hospitals, and then pretend to be the fire department, when they themselves are the arsonists.

On 14 April, President Trump's leadership enabled the first historic talks between the Governments of Israel and Lebanon. Both Governments have repeatedly made clear that neither wants this war. Israel has provided clear assurances that it has no territorial ambitions in Lebanon, and Lebanon has stated its determination to disarm Hizbullah once and for all. Thanks again to President Trump's personal leadership on this issue, another round of talks is happening. The legitimate Government of Lebanon is demonstrating real courage and leadership. They are trying finally to free their country from a terrorist organization that answers to Tehran and does not care about the suffering of its people. We are backing the Lebanese Government's efforts to make Lebanon great again. This is what leadership looks like. This is what diplomacy is supposed to do: create space for peace, put pressure on the problem and give legitimate Governments a chance to act.

The way to support the de-escalation to which we all aspire, and the way to support peace, is by focusing on the reason that this conflict started and continues. Both de-escalation and peace will come quickly if Hizbullah immediately ceases its attacks, as it has apparently promised, and the Government of Lebanon asserts its full sovereignty, rebuilds and brings its people home.

The path is clear. Hizbullah stops attacking Israel. The Lebanese Armed Forces and the legitimate Government of Lebanon assert control over Lebanese territory. Iran stops using Lebanon as a forward operating base. And the Lebanese people, who have suffered for far too long, finally get a chance to rebuild a country that belongs to them — not Hizbullah, not its thug leadership and certainly not Tehran.

Mr. Brown II (Liberia): Liberia thanks the Assistant Secretary-General for her briefing.

There is a particular burden in extending hope to people in distress without delivering on it. The statistics that have been recounted, including by many of those around this table, related to the ongoing worsening situation in Lebanon are troubling. Today, we meet not only in the face of a seriously deteriorating conflict, but also in the shadow of commitments that have not yet been fulfilled to a people who have endured repeated hardship and disappointments.

As we have heard from the Assistant Secretary-General, the 17 April ceasefire, which was recently extended, is now under severe strain. With Israeli forces reportedly crossing the Litani River and seizing Beaufort Castle, we are witnessing an unfortunate erosion of confidence in the diplomatic process. Let us be clear: diplomatic negotiations cannot be meaningfully advanced while realities on the ground are being altered through military actions inside the territory of a sovereign State.

My country's own history of State collapse, armed non-State factions and the long road of security sector reform informs our perspective, which is that, to move forward, the Council must confront the three structural frictions undermining a resolution, namely, a Lebanese sovereignty deficit, an Israeli security deficit and an international credibility deficit. These combine to compound, in our view, these realities.

Lebanon has a legitimate sovereignty claim. Israel cannot indefinitely conduct military operations inside Lebanon. Non-State actors must be disarmed. Israeli security and Lebanese sovereignty are not competing objectives; they are mutually dependent. As we have heard from the briefers, to continue on the current course is to subject the region to an unacceptable choice between recurring escalation and prolonged instability, neither of which offers a credible basis for peace, civilian protection or regional security and stability — matters that continue to be a focus of the Council.

Liberia makes the following calls. Consistent with Council resolutions, there must be an immediate cessation of offensive operations and a freeze on all force movements,

overseen by enhanced United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) monitoring and public reporting. Concurrently, the international community must provide financial, humanitarian and logistical support to the Lebanese authorities and State institutions, because the simple truth is that no State, however good its intentions might be, can be expected to exercise sovereignty without the accompanying capacity to do so. Again, it is imperative that all non-State actors be disarmed by the Lebanese authorities. Finally, we must replace reliance on goodwill alone with strengthened verification mechanisms and clear consequences for violations by any party, thereby reducing incentives for unilateral action.

With UNIFIL's mandate concluding in December, we cannot and must not wait for a vacuum to exist. The Secretary-General's options paper, which is due this month, must be received with the required urgency and diplomatic action by the Council, demonstrating a commitment to ongoing diplomatic initiatives and their improvement and to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

The world is watching closely to see whether the Council can respond with unity, seriousness and purpose. We must not fall short of that responsibility to that troubled region, certainly not to Lebanon, and must work for the peace of that region.

Mr. Moscoso (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): We observe with deep concern the intensification of hostilities in Lebanon over the past few hours, resulting in new displacement orders for civilian communities and further restrictions on humanitarian access, despite the cessation of hostilities and the understandings reached through the mediation of the United States. Once again, it is civilians, in both Lebanon and Israel, who continue to pay the highest price for this conflict.

According to the latest available information, since the intensification of hostilities began on 2 March, at least 3,355 people have lost their lives and more than 10,000 have been injured in Lebanon. Furthermore, more than 1 million people have been displaced, including more than 130,000 who currently remain in 634 shelters.

Panama also expresses its condemnation of the ongoing attacks carried out by Hizbullah against northern Israel, including drone attacks that have caused deaths and injuries among the civilian population.

Panama reiterates that all parties have an obligation to respect and protect civilians, medical and humanitarian personnel and civilian infrastructure in accordance with international humanitarian law, international human rights law and the fundamental principles of humanity.

Panama reaffirms its firm support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon. We also recognize the ongoing efforts of the Lebanese Government, under the leadership of President Joseph Aoun, and the Lebanese Army to maintain the country's stability under extraordinarily complex circumstances. At times such as the present, it is essential to continue strengthening the capacities of Lebanese State institutions and to support efforts aimed at consolidating the legitimate authority of the State throughout the national territory. We value the readiness shown by the Lebanese and Israeli authorities to participate in dialogue and negotiation mechanisms aimed at reducing tensions and addressing outstanding issues. We encourage the preservation and strengthening of those efforts, as they offer a constructive path towards greater stability and security in the region.

At the same time, we reiterate our full support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and insist that the security, integrity and freedom of movement of its personnel, as well as the protection and inviolability of its facilities, must be fully respected by all parties. Any attack, threat or interference against the mission is unacceptable.

The evolution of the ongoing events highlights the need to preserve the understandings reached and to continue to give priority to dialogue and negotiation over confrontation. Panama urges the parties to fully respect and comply with the commitments undertaken, to act with the utmost restraint and to refrain from actions that could further aggravate the situation. No sustainable solution can emerge from further military escalation.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I would like to join colleagues in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Martha Pobe for her comprehensive yet deeply alarming briefing.

Despite the ceasefire arrangement and direct talks between Israel and Lebanon, the security and humanitarian situation in Lebanon continues to deteriorate drastically. With the expansion of Israeli military operations and ground incursions into Lebanese territory, 2,000 square kilometres — nearly 20 per cent of Lebanon — now lie under illegal Israeli occupation. Unlawful evacuation orders are further inflicting immense suffering on civilians.

It seems that this is the same strategy — the same playbook — that we have seen elsewhere: indiscriminate killing, forced displacement and occupation. Since March of this year, more than 3,400 people, including women and children, have been killed, and more than 10,000 injured. More than 1 million people have been displaced. As the Humanitarian Coordinator also said, civilians across Lebanon have faced an appalling escalation of violence, displacement and human loss. Equally alarming are the attacks on humanitarian and medical personnel, with 125 health workers killed and more than 300 injured since March, according to the World Health Organization.

Then there are the attacks on Lebanon's cultural and historical sites, which are shocking. Tyre, a UNESCO World Heritage Site under enhanced protection, has been struck, along with the capture of Beaufort Castle.

All these reckless Israeli actions, condemnable as they are, which violate Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, constitute a flagrant breach of international law and, more than that, seriously undermine diplomatic efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in Lebanon and the region.

Pakistan supports all diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalation and echoes the Secretary-General's call on all sides to fully utilize diplomatic channels and recommit to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Sustainable peace can be achieved only through dialogue and diplomacy. We also welcome the efforts of the United States to facilitate a ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel, and we support its continuing engagement in this process.

Pakistan appreciates the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to restore stability, strengthen State authority and ensure that the use of force is the exclusive prerogative of the Lebanese State through its legitimate institutions, with the Lebanese Armed Forces playing a central role. As we have heard in the briefing and from several colleagues around the table, unfortunately, Israeli actions are undermining the efforts of the Lebanese Government.

Pakistan's position is clear and consistent. We call for full respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity; an immediate cessation of hostilities and strict adherence to the ceasefire arrangements by all sides; and the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), with complete Israeli withdrawal to the Blue Line.

In the complex, interconnected theatres of conflict, a stable and peaceful Lebanon is essential for regional peace and security. The international community must act with urgency to prevent further escalation and advance a diplomatic solution consistent with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Pakistan stands in solidarity

with the people and the Government of Lebanon and will continue to support all efforts aimed at promoting peace, stability and hope in the region.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the interpreters, who are with us so that we can continue with this meeting.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Colombia.

I thank Ms. Martha Pobe, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, for her briefing. I wish to thank France for requesting this meeting, a call that Colombia supported in view of the gravity of the situation. I welcome the Permanent Representative of Lebanon and greet the delegations joining us.

Colombia expresses its solidarity with the Lebanese people and categorically condemns all acts of Israeli aggression and occupation throughout the territory of Lebanon. Netanyahu's recent statements indicate a clear intention to continue his illegal expansionist campaign, on the assumption that he can continue to act with impunity.

The expansion of the ground offensive, the taking of Beaufort and the new attacks carried out in towns north of the Litani River constitute a clear violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. The actions taken by Israel under the false premise of strengthening its security have had an extremely grave humanitarian impact. We must recall that the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution are not theoretical formulas. As always, it is the civilian population that suffers the most severe consequences.

The Council cannot continue to ignore recent reports of civilians wounded by Israeli air strikes while complying with evacuation orders. These acts, as well as the illegal orders for mass displacement and previous attacks recorded against members of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, journalists and health personnel, are violations of international humanitarian law attributable to Israel and may constitute war crimes. Ensuring accountability is a responsibility of the entire international community.

At the same time, my delegation recognizes the actions taken by the Lebanese Government to achieve a ceasefire through negotiation and to fulfil its commitments. However, Israel's aggression is undermining diplomatic efforts and jeopardizing the country's domestic policy. Colombia urges all parties to refrain from any actions contrary to international law, including the United Nations Charter and international humanitarian law, and to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1701 (2006). In that regard, my country reiterates its call for an immediate, effective and definitive ceasefire and for full respect for Lebanon's political independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

In conclusion, Colombia reiterates once again that Israel's systematic violation of international law must cease. Israel's attacks on Lebanon follow the same pattern as what we have been witnessing in Gaza over the past few years: the expansion of a campaign of mass displacement and ethnic cleansing aimed at permanently extending the illegal occupation and territorial annexation throughout the region.

What is happening today is the result of the selective application of international law and the impunity with which the Netanyahu regime has been allowed to act. The international community has an obligation to act in the face of serious violations of international law, ensuring accountability, in defence of human dignity and life itself. The Council cannot continue to ignore its duty in the face of this situation.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Mr. Arafat (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let us go back to 26 November 2024, the date of the declaration of cessation of hostilities, which was reached under the welcome auspices of the United States and France.

Lebanon has fully adhered to the cessation of hostilities. In stark contrast, Israel has violated it on a daily basis and, at times, on a large scale. By 2 March, these violations had claimed the lives of more than 400 people, injured more than 2,000 people, most of them civilians, and destroyed thousands of homes, not to mention the anxiety and anguish endured by every Lebanese citizen over the past 15 months as a result of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Israel also continued to occupy areas in the south, unlawfully detain a number of Lebanese nationals and carry out other illegal practices.

Even after the election of a President of the Republic and the formation of a Government that won the confidence of the Parliament on the basis of an ambitious reform programme that focused on rebuilding institutions and the extension of State authority over its entire territory through its own forces, Israel continued its violations and destructive practices, thereby undermining stability in Lebanon and the wider region. It is as if the intention of those violations were to derail the resurgence of the State — the sole guarantor of the security of its citizens and a State determined to contribute to the establishment of security and peace within its region and fundamentally committed to all relevant international resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006).

Recently, particularly since 2 March, the Lebanese Government has not wavered in shouldering its responsibilities and took a series of bold measures and decisions based exclusively on the best interests of Lebanon and the Lebanese people, refusing to turn Lebanon into an arena for settling foreign scores, especially after Lebanon and its people were dragged into a war they did not choose.

Despite the Government's efforts to contain the crisis, Israel, as usual, capitalizing on a tense regional climate, has engaged in dangerous military escalation that has claimed thousands of lives, and continues its systematic destruction of villages, towns and residential neighbourhoods, targeting medical staff, hospitals, journalists, schools, infrastructure, security services, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon troops, places of worship, archaeological sites designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and countless other targets that embody Lebanon's collective memory and civilizational identity.

Lebanon unequivocally condemns in the strongest terms these Israeli practices and violations, which are contrary to the provisions of the Charter, international human rights law and international humanitarian law — and in many instances amount to war crimes. While Israel consistently boasts of its actions taken in self-defence, such claims do not absolve it of its obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular those relating to proportionality, discrimination and precaution.

The establishment of security zones and the demarcation of geographical lines is a direct occupation and a flagrant violation of Lebanon's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. The Council must speak in one voice and condemn such actions of aggression. It must fulfil its obligations under the Charter to put an end to them. The intentions of the Israeli Government are now as clear as day. They are reflected in the statements and calls of its officials for the need to expand the scope of aggression and occupy wider swathes of Lebanese territory. This is undoubtedly the result of a collective failure to generate solutions, coupled with a lack of accountability, which only fuels a culture of impunity of punishment. That, in turn, leads the perpetrator to commit the very same crimes time and time again.

Israel has experienced this occupation before, and throughout its many longer years, it has neither heeded the repeated calls of the Council nor listened to the desire

of the international community for it to withdraw from Lebanon, even after stability had been restored there. That occupation left no sin against humanity uncommitted, thereby triggering cycles of violence, whose sole outcome has been the creation of a culture predicated on the rejection of the other, the refusal of dialogue and the pursuit of temporary fixes rather than sustainable solutions that address problems at their very roots.

In contrast to this prevailing logic of violence, allow me to draw the Council's attention once again to the initiative put forward by the President of the Lebanese Republic on 9 March. Let the Council reconsider the content of that initiative, which is grounded, first and foremost, on de-escalation and a ceasefire. It then calls for bolstering the capabilities of the State, which has inherited a heavy legacy from decades of regional geopolitical interplay, in order to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities. This would pave the way for serious dialogue aimed at achieving lasting and sustainable solutions.

Allow me to once again commend United States President Donald Trump and the United States Administration for their initiative and their constructive efforts aimed at giving diplomacy a chance. We also commend President Trump for his personal efforts today to ensure de-escalation. We stress Lebanon's commitment to providing the conditions and requirements necessary for success — a commitment grounded in our national priorities, namely the cessation of Israeli aggressions, its full withdrawal, the return of prisoners, reconstruction and the return of our forcibly displaced people.

Israel's commitment to a full and effective ceasefire is the essential prerequisite for the Lebanese State's commitment to extend its authority and control over its entire territory and borders. The State pledges that, once that is achieved, it alone can be held accountable and answerable for any subsequent violation. This overarching Lebanese objective, reaffirmed by the Council of Ministers on 2 March, has remained stalled owing to Israel's failure to comply with the declaration of 26 February 2024. This path is the only one capable of achieving security and peace along our international borders, contrary to the illusions of military victories, on the one hand, or bilateral regional deals, on the other.

We would be remiss not to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the future implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), issued today pursuant to paragraph 10 of resolution 2790 (2025). We will have the opportunity to study the report in depth, and we assure the Council and its member States of our determination to engage with them in a serious and objective discussion on this matter in the coming days, in a manner that takes into account the sensitive phase Lebanon that is currently experiencing. Recent developments have intensified Lebanon's urgent need for continued United Nations and international assistance, with the aim of securing Israeli withdrawal on the one hand and extending the State's authority over its entire territory on the other hand.

I thank all the States that have expressed their solidarity with Lebanon and its people in the face of the hardships they are enduring and for the political and humanitarian support they have provided to alleviate the burden of the crisis on all Lebanese people, particularly those who have been forcibly displaced. I also take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. We also thank France for convening this emergency meeting and Ms. Martha Pobe for the briefing she provided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Danon (Israel): First, I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Martha Pobe for her briefing.

We meet today because Israel is once again being asked to explain why it is defending itself. So, let me begin clearly. Israel did not wake up one morning and decide to enter Lebanon because we wanted to do it. We do not want escalation. We do not seek Lebanese territory. Israel does not seek conflict with the Lebanese people. The problem is Hizbullah. And the past three speakers in this Chamber — the Pakistani Ambassador, Madam President and the Lebanese Ambassador — failed to mention Hizbullah. No one can actually name it. But that is the reason we had no choice to enter Lebanon. The problem is Hizbullah. It must be named.

On 2 March, Hizbullah chose to fire on Israel without provocation. And it did so not to defend Lebanon, not to help the Lebanese people, not to build a better future for the region. Hizbullah fired on us to serve Iran. It got instructions from Tehran. And it continues to get instructions from Tehran.

While the Iranian regime delays the negotiations, stalls diplomatic progress and buys time for its proxies, Hizbullah is doing what Iran wants it to do on the ground. It is keeping the fire alive. It is keeping Lebanon hostage. It is keeping northern Israel under attack. That is why Israel had to act.

Over the past weekend Hizbullah's attacks on our northern communities have intensified. We have seen the heaviest levels of fires since the April ceasefire. But let us be honest for a minute. For the people of northern Israel, this has not been a ceasefire. It has felt like a continuation of fire because Hizbullah never really stopped. It kept firing. It kept rearming. It kept shooting rockets and drones towards our soldiers and our civilian communities. And this weekend the threat expanded.

It was not only the communities next to the border — not only Rosh HaNikra, Shlomi and Kiryat Shmona — the fire this past weekend reached deeper. It reached cities such as Nahariyya and Tsfat, which are not next to the border. Cities and hospitals miles from the border were forced into shelters. As we speak, families are running for safe rooms. Schools are closed for a while. Businesses are shut. Normal life has once again stopped. Thousands of school children are home today in northern Israel because Hizbullah has made it impossible for them to go safely to school.

Since 2 March, Hizbullah has fired at Israel approximately 10,000 rockets. Think about that number — 10,000 rockets. There have been at least 75 rocket impact sites inside Israeli territory. Hizbullah has launched approximately 300 drones. Some of us participated in a very important stake-out two hours ago about one drone in Romania. We are talking about 300 drones. And all of this is being carried out by a terrorist army that has entrenched itself across southern Lebanon in direct violation of resolution 1701 (2006).

Today more than 2,500 Hizbullah terrorists are operating south of the Litani River with thousands more positioned further north. They have turned villages into military positions. We know that. We see that. We are paying a heavy price. Just today Dr. Ori Yosef Silvester, a military doctor was killed by a Hizbullah drone. Overnight Adam Tzarfati, a 20-year-old soldier was killed by a Hizbullah drone. Earlier this week 21-year-old Michael Tyukin was killed by a Hizbullah drone. Michael was an only child who moved with his mother from Ukraine six years ago. Hizbullah attacks both our soldiers and our civilians.

Just yesterday, Hizbullah's suicide drone struck a building in a peaceful town by the name of Bet Hillel in the upper Galilee. It was not a military base; it is a beautiful place in the Galilee. Over the weekend families on the beach in the city of Nahariyya were forced to run for cover as Hizbullah missiles and drones targeted northern Israel. This has become the reality of daily life in Israel. Let us therefore talk about the drones for one minute.

When people speak about drones, it sounds like something distant, like a toy, like something technological or abstract. For Israel, there is nothing abstract about it. This is an example of a drone used by Hizbullah. Look at it. This is what we are dealing with. Now Hizbullah is using different kinds of drones, a few of them with fiber optics. These drones weigh less than 2 kilograms. One can very easily get them online. They fly low. They are very difficult to detect. And by the time one hears them above one's head, it is too late. They can fly undetected for tens of miles. And all of a sudden one sees them above one's head.

A thin cable is what makes this drone different. It does not rely on a radio signal. It cannot be easily jammed, unfortunately. It gives the operator a live video feed and direct control until impact. The operator can guide it through a window into a vehicle. This is modern warfare: cheap, precise and deadly. Imagine for a moment that swarms of drones were headed towards members' cities — not our cities, members' cities, members' communities. I ask my colleague from France, if France were under attack from Spain, would it hesitate to take action? Would it wait until the drones were buzzing over Paris and it heard them? Would it wait until they exploded? Or would it do what every responsible Government does and eliminate the threat?

Israel has made its choice. We will not wait for those drones to detonate. We will not wait for more funerals. The drone threat is a challenge — we have to admit it — but it is a challenge that we will overcome. We are now investing a great deal in it. Our best minds are already working on the technologies and tactics needed to defeat it, and we will find a solution for it. But until then, we cannot wait for the next one to cross the border. We will continue to neutralize the threat before it reaches our people.

Instead of helping ensure that resolution 1701 (2006) is finally implemented, some members of the Council, including you, Madam President, seem more interested in condemning Israel's response than in confronting the terrorists creating the danger. Instead of demanding that Hizbullah disarm, they demand that Israel stand down. President Macron recently said that "nothing justifies the escalation in southern Lebanon". Nothing? Not the swarms of drones? Not the 10,000 rockets fired at our people? If that is not justification, what is?

Israel did not start this escalation. Hizbullah did. And Israel will not apologize for defending itself. Israel does not seek Lebanese territory. We left Lebanon in 2000 because we did not want to stay there. And we do not want to stay there today. Israel and Lebanon are engaged in historic direct talks, with American mediation, because we believe that a better future is possible. Those talks continue despite today's challenges. Our commitment to the talks continues, but make no mistake: Israel will not sit idly by while Hizbullah rearms, retracts and fires the next attack. As long as Hizbullah threatens our citizens, Israel will act wherever necessary — south or north of the Litani River — to defend them. If there is no quiet in northern Israel, there will be no quiet for Hizbullah. If our children are running to shelters, Hizbullah's leadership will not enjoy safe haven — not in southern Lebanon or in Beirut. No terrorist will have immunity.

The path to peace is not complicated. We know what it takes — the complete disarmament of Hizbullah, a strong Lebanese State, a strong Lebanese Armed Forces, one Government, one army, one sovereign authority.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.